

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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¡Bienvenidos! Chilean Rangers from Parque Nacional Alerce Costero Visiting This Week

Employees of Redwood National and State Parks (RNSP) hope Del Norte and Humboldt County residents will join them in welcoming a delegation of Corporacion Nacional Forestal de Chile (CONAF) employees visiting the area beginning this Sunday, September 23rd. The visit is the next step in the development of a Sister Park relationship to foster the exchange of cultural and technical information between Redwood and Parque Nacional Alerce Costero. This relationship, which has evolved from common park resources and conservation interests, has also been supported in part by the National Park Service's Office of International Affairs and the State Department.

In March 2012 a delegation from Redwood National and State Parks visited with managers of Alerce Costero in Chile. There, they learned in more detail some of the similarities between these parks that occupy 40 degrees north and 40 degree south latitude.

In return, RNSP is pleased to host the Chilean delegation for a week of mutually beneficial exchange of information and ideas about the best practices for the preservation of natural and cultural resources and for the provision of outstanding educational and recreational opportunities for park visitors. During this trip employees and partners will visit several areas in the state and national park partnership, demonstrate some of the management practices found to be effective for maintaining, restoring, and interpreting these resources for the public, and hold a working meeting to draft a partnership agreement to define and support future exchanges.

The Alerce Costero National Park spans nearly 62,000 acres (25,000 hectares) to the west of Valdivia, constitutes Chile's largest protected zone for mainland temperate coastal forests, including the native alerce trees, which resemble California's giant redwoods and can live up to 4,000 years. The mutual interests and similarities between the two parks make for a compelling partnership. Both the coast redwood and the alerce are iconic resources—the tallest trees in each respective country (the alerce is the tallest in South America). Both parks have a similar history of resource use and protection, along with ongoing issues of land use surrounding the protected areas. Both are located in temperate rainforest ecosystems at 40 degrees north and south latitude and have high biodiversity and global importance for conservation. The agencies also share common goals for forest restoration, science and research partnerships with area universities, coordinated development of research related to temperate rain forest environments, and planning for sustainable community development and inspirational public use in relatively new conservation areas.

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Several bilingual NPS employees will help the group with the challenge of communicating complex natural and cultural resource information and issues in two languages, but employees of both parks have already discovered their commonalities go a long way towards jumping over any language hurdles. “It is fascinating how much we have in common,” states Dave Roemer, the Chief of Resource Management for Redwood National Park. “We not only share similar resources, though half a world apart, but also (and maybe most importantly) a mutual passion for taking care of these places that are so extraordinary for our countries and the world.”

In the past 20 years, dozens of “sister parks” relationships have been established between U.S. and foreign national parks as a way of increasing the flow of useful information between parks at little or no cost. The United States of America can claim the idea of national parks—and idea that has grown since the 1870’s to a National Park System comprised of 397 areas covering more than 84 million acres in every state (except Delaware), the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands—but it is an idea that also grown around the world. Nearly 100 countries around the world now also have lands classified as a national parks. “Sharing and learning together,” states Roemer, “helps us all get better and build bridges.”

If you see the delegation out and about Redwood National and State Parks or enjoying the sights in Crescent City or Arcata this week, please greet them with a big north coast smile and “¡*Bienvenidos!*”

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